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Compulsory Arbitration Impracticable.

Hon. Andrew D. White has given his opinion on compulsory arbitration in a letter to Dr. E. H. Magill, of Swarthmore, Pa. We quote what he says on this subject:

The fundamental principle which you seem to lay down, namely, that arbitration should be made compulsory, or at least that there should be some means of enforcing the decrees of a high International Court, is utterly inadmissible in these days, and, so far as I can see, will never be attained.

While we, in common with Russia and several other powers, were willing to have compulsory arbitration adopted for some minor questions of ordinary business, and while I myself, in view of my experience in the diplomatic service, would hail some such relief of our diplomatic representatives with especial satisfaction, even this was swept away in the opposition of various powers to anything like a compulsory system.

The great difficulty is that there are such a multitude of difficulties between nations, involving burning questions of race, religion, national security and even existence, and it is so exceedingly difficult to draw a line between these and other questions, that no nation represented at the Conference was willing to tie itself to anything like a thorough system of compulsory arbitration.

Compulsory arbitration, unless so carefully restricted that it ceases to be really compulsory, in cases likely to produce war, would unquestionably come to mean the power of any

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and every nation to drag any and every other into an international tribunal. Think what that would mean in the questions between France and Germany, or Russia and some of her neighbors, or Italy and Austria, or in a multitude of other cases which we could think of.

As to enforcing the decrees, I must confess to you that this seems even more chimerical. Your plan would simply dismiss these powers from diplomatic relations with the others; that is, it would abolish all the ordinary means of preserving peace, with the result that a condition of war would doubtless soon follow.

I understand that young Professor Woolsey of Yale has written an article in which he takes the ground that arbitration to be effective must be compulsory, and that the logical result of this is that the various nations should maintain an army sufficient to enforce their decrees. I have not read the article, but am told that this is the fundamental idea of it. This, of course, means something infinitely worse than the difficulty which afflicts the world at present. It means the increase of armies and the use of them in accordance with intrigues between various powerful states, in so far as the powers would consent to allow their contingents in this vast army to be thus used.

It is as clear to me as the day that our Conference did the best that could be done. After a world of thought and pains by a great body of men among the most competent in the world to really discuss the subject, there was prepared a system of voluntary arbitration with a carefully stated procedure and with various subsidiary institutions to promote general mediation, special mediation and commissions of inquiry, the purpose of which last is to substitute facts carefully ascertained by experts for the insane or malicious lying with which the public is generally deluged on both sides when questions arise likely to produce war.

Our trust, to make resort to this court more and more constant and its decrees more and more like law, must be in the public opinion of various countries. My hope and, to a considerable extent, my belief are that such public opinion will more and more oblige governments to resort to the court and to abide by its decisions.

Another thing to be done by public opinion is to discountenance the sort of journalism which lives by providing sensations, reports likely to provoke hostile feelings between nations. At present that sort of thing is rampant, and especially in the United States and France.

Our Greatest Hope.

Mr. W. T. Stead says that the last time he met Mr. Gladstone he asked him what he regarded the greatest hope of the future. After a moment's thoughtfulness he answered: "I should say that for our greatest hope we must look to the maintenance of faith in the invisible; this is the great hope of the future; it is the mainstay of civilization; and by that I mean a living faith in a personal God. I do not hold with streams of tendency; after sixty years of public life I hold more strongly than ever this conviction, deepened and strengthened by long experience, of the reality of the nearness of the personality of God."

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